



*St. Paul
Catholic Church
Wedding Guidelines*

WE'RE GETTING MARRIED!

Congratulations! One of the most important and exciting milestones in a person's life is getting married. Becoming engaged sets into motion many events and lots of planning, not the least of which is arranging for the wedding ceremony itself. This booklet is written to guide you through the process of deciding on a church wedding;

1. preparing for a church wedding and a lifetime of Christian marriage; and
2. planning a church wedding at St. Paul Catholic Church.

PREPARING FOR A LIFETIME OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a lifelong commitment. No other decision you make may be as important as this one. We are not just helping you prepare for your wedding day; our primary focus is preparing you for your married life. Below are the steps you will need to complete.

1. **Meetings with the priest.** *At least six months prior to their desired wedding date* the couple meets with the priest. At this meeting forms required for marriage in the church are filled out; the priest explains and answers questions about the entire preparation process. Additional meetings with the priest are scheduled as needed.

2. **Attend a Marriage Preparation Retreat.** *At least three months prior to your desired wedding date,* the couple should attend a Marriage Preparation Retreat. This is a time for the couple to grow in their relationship and gain a better understanding of the Catholic understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage. There are four possible types of retreats, and each has a different cost, location, length of time , and emphasis. The four possible retreats are:

Tobit Weekend: <https://www.archindy.org/fatima/calendar/tobit.html>

One in Christ: <https://www.oicindy.com/>

Pre-Cana Workshop:

<https://www.archindy.org/marriageandfamily/marriage-precana.html>

Engaged Encounter: <https://www.engagedencounter.org/>

The Certificate of Completion from this weekend is to be Presented at the Parish office. A copy is included in your marriage file.

3. **Work with a Sponsor Couple.** Following the completion of your engaged Encounter weekend you will be assigned a Sponsor Couple with whom you will complete a pre-marriage inventory. We want to ensure that as a couple you are discussing and reaching agreement on issues and areas that are important in forming strong, healthy, lifelong marriages. The Sponsor Couple will share the wisdom of their experiences and can be a valuable resource for you both before and after your wedding day.

4. **Attend our Wedding Workshop.** *At least three months prior to your desired wedding date* the couple should attend this workshop.

The workshops are held three times a year and you will receive a list of dates and a registration form in your information packet. During this workshop you will learn the nuts and bolts of the Catholic marriage ceremony and how it is celebrated at St. Paul's. As a couple you will "walk through the rite." You'll learn what choices you have, how you can involve friends and family, appropriate music for your ceremony, and discuss decorations and other aspects of your big day.

5. Rehearsal Preparation. After completing steps 1-4 above, and two to four weeks prior to the wedding date itself, the couple meets again with the priest to review in detail the marriage ceremony.

6. Sacrament of Reconciliation. Your wedding is a milestone in your life and a great new beginning. You can prepare for a better future together if you receive the sacrament of reconciliation before your wedding. Catholic parishes have regular times when the sacrament is available, and these are listed in the parish bulletin. Don't miss this important chance to begin your marriage fully open to receiving and benefiting from God's graces and blessings.

7. Marriage Preparation Elsewhere. If you wish to be married at St. Paul's, but find it more convenient to have a priest from another parish (even another state) conduct your marriage preparation, this can be arranged. You are also welcome to ask a priest or deacon from another parish who is a relative or friend to preside at your wedding here at St. Paul. Please contact the pastor for details.

ARE YOU A CATHOLIC MARRYING A NON-CATHOLIC?

In a mixed marriage, the issue of choosing a faith in which to rear your children can be a sensitive one which merits full, frank and charitable discussion between the future spouses. It is normal for people of faith to have a desire to share their faith with their children and the Catholic Church expects this to be true of Catholics.

For this reason, the law of the Church requires that the Catholic party sign a promise to do everything possible (while respecting the rights of his or her spouse) to have children of the marriage baptized and raised as Catholics. The non-Catholic party needs to be aware of this promise. No such promise is asked of the non-Catholic party, who has their own right to reach a decision in this important matter.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING LITURGY

In this section you will find some basic guidelines that we ask you to follow when planning your wedding celebration at St. Paul Church. Each couple will be given a copy of “Together for Life,” a wedding liturgy planning tool. You will go through this booklet at the Wedding Workshop.

THE DATE? THE TIME?

There are certain times when, because of archdiocesan liturgical guidelines or special seasonal considerations, we do not schedule weddings. Below you will find a list of these times:

- Season of Advent
- Season of Lent
- First Communion weekend
- Parish Picnic weekend
- Schweizer Fest weekend

Weddings can be scheduled on Friday evenings or Saturday afternoon no later than 2:00 p.m.

MASS OR CEREMONY?

The Rite of Marriage can be performed as part of a mass or outside of mass. When both of the couple are Catholic, the Rite of Marriage should be celebrated within mass. When one of the couple is not Catholic the Rite of Marriage should be celebrated outside of mass.

If you are still unsure which option to choose, talk it over with the priest. He will help to guide you to the best option for you.

PEOPLE TO INVOLVE

- **Wedding Party:** You will need at least two persons (usually 1 male and 1 female) to serve as you witnesses. Though only two witnesses are necessary you may choose others as well. It is also acceptable to have children serve as a ring bearer and flower girl.
- **Servers:** For weddings within Mass, two servers are required. For weddings outside Mass, no servers are required. The parish will be happy to provide servers at your request. A gift of \$20.00 each is customary, since they are giving up their time on a Saturday afternoon to be of service to you.
- **Lectors:** You will need one to three persons who will read the scriptures and the petitions during your wedding. You will learn more about this at the Wedding Workshop.

- **Gift Bearers:** (only needed for a full mass) You will need two or more persons to carry the Eucharistic gifts to the altar.
- **Communion Ministers:** (only needed for a full mass) Usually you will need at least two ministers for the cup. If you anticipate more than 150 Catholics attending the Wedding, you may want to have another bread minister as well.

MUSIC

An important part of any liturgical celebration is the music. When you attend the Wedding Workshop you will learn where music is needed, and hear examples of some appropriate songs.

You will also be given a list of Cantors and Organists. You will want to work with the cantor and organist when choosing music for your wedding, but keep in mind that all music within liturgy must be appropriate for its function, and speak to the sacred nature of the celebration.

The music you wish to use for your wedding must be approved by the parish Music Dir. The music line-up should be submitted at least one month before your wedding date.

No CD's or tapes may be used during the wedding liturgy.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact the Music Dir. at the Catholic Ministry Center (812-547-7994.)

CHURCH ENVIRONMENT

Weddings are very special celebrations and special care is taken to make sure the church looks beautiful. Our personal experience with many weddings leads us to establish these guidelines. They will help you in deciding how to augment the church environment without hindering the ritual action, or causing damage to, or undue wear and tear on, the church environment.

Pew Decorations: Bows may be put on the pews. We ask that a minimum of tape (must be masking tape) be used so that no damage is done to the wood finish. (NO STICKY PUTTY – NO LIVE GREENERY)

Sanctuary Decorations: Plants and flowers may be arranged in the sanctuary with the following restrictions:

Nothing may be placed in the area between the Presider's Chair and the front of the altar platform. Nothing may be placed on the altar itself. Furniture and liturgical symbols (permanent or seasonal) may not be moved for any reason.

Plants: The parish has a number of green plants that may be used for weddings. Please consult with the Music Dir.

Candelabra: The parish has one set of candelabra that can be used in the sanctuary. There is no rental fee. If you wish to use other candelabra please consult with the Music Director.

Altar Cloths: The parish has two sets of cloths for the altar and pulpit. One set is white, and one set is ivory. You can choose whichever set you wish and it will be put in place by the Music Dir. or sacristan.

SPECIAL NOTES:

- If a florist brings in special plants or other items to use in the environment **they must be picked up immediately after the wedding.**
- If you have a flower girl, only silk petals may be dropped. Real flower petals contain oils that can stain and damage carpet.
- No rice or birdseed may be thrown outside of church. The wedding party carries the rice or seeds in on their clothes and shoes and they become embedded in the carpet and can break down the carpet fibers.

PICTURES/VIDEO

At most weddings, a photographer, and perhaps videographer, have been hired to provide a pictorial record of the wedding. We understand that this record is important, but it is essential that the focus of those participating in this liturgy be the liturgy itself – not the person making a record of it. With this in mind, we ask that **no photographer or video camera be in or around the sanctuary area while the liturgy is taking place.** *When you attend the Wedding Workshop you will learn exactly where video cameras can be set up, and from where pictures can be taken.*

Please share this information with your photographer and or videographer.

Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal should be scheduled with the priest. Persons who need to be present at the rehearsal are listed below:

The Couple

Parents of the couple

Attendants (*anyone involved in the processional*)

Ushers

All readers (*they should be prepared to practice at the rehearsal.*)

Server – *If applicable*

Gift Bearers – *If applicable*

Communion Ministers – *If applicable*

Videotaping during the rehearsal is prohibited. A wedding rehearsal is an informal occasion, but due decorum and respect for God's house are still expected. Make yourselves comfortable, but respect the sacredness of the place.

THE WEDDING LICENSE AND CERTIFICATE SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE REHEARSAL.

FACILITIES GUIDELINES & FEES

In this section you will find guidelines regarding the use of St. Paul Church building and adjacent spaces, for your wedding. Please read through these guidelines carefully.

SPACES AVAILABLE

There are a number of spaces (other than the worship space) that are made available to the wedding party to help them to prepare for the wedding. They are as follows:

The Cry Room: This is a room with blinds off the Jefferson St. entrance. It can be used by the bride to prepare. All the furniture in this space can be moved and there is a full length mirror on the wall.

The Parish Hall: This is a large area off the Narthex that can be used by the wedding party to relax. Any food or drink brought in should be stored and consumed in this area. Please do not carry food or drinks into other areas of the buildings.

The Nursery: There is a nursery in the new building which can

be used by the wedding party to dress. There are restrooms just down the hall

Choir Loft: The choir loft may be used by the photographer to take pictures, or to set up a video camera.

Worship Space: The worship space is made available at 8:30 a.m. Saturday morning so that florists may come in to decorate and for picture taking. Because the Church must be made ready for the weekend masses, all pictures after the wedding must be finished by 4:00 p.m.

SPECIAL NOTE: If there is a funeral on that Saturday morning, you will not be able to use the church until after the funeral – around 11:00 a.m.

We ask that you not use other prayer spaces adjacent to the worship space; i.e. Reconciliation Room, Blessed Sacrament Chapel, and Devotional Chapel.

Any items brought in; e.g. clothing, hangers, dry cleaning bags, food, or drinks, must be removed following the wedding celebration.

NO ALCOHOL MAY BE BROUGHT TO OR CONSUMED IN ANY OF THE PARISH BUILDINGS OR ON THE PARKING LOT. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT ON THE DAY OF YOUR WEDDING, BECAUSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION MAY BE USED AS JUST CAUSE TO NULLIFY YOUR MARRIAGE. VIOLATORS WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE PARISH GROUNDS IMMEDIATELY.

FEES

Below you will find an explanation of fees for the use of St Paul Parish for weddings.

Church Fee: This fee is \$225.00 for parishioners of St. Paul, St. Mark, St. Michael and St. parishes and \$400.00 for non-parishioners. This fee includes the fee for the use of the church (lighting, heating/AC, hosts, wine, candles), access to Parish Hall and several areas in the Ministry Center prior and during the wedding, a custodial fee (clean and reset areas for our weekend liturgies), and the fee for the “Prepare and Enrich” questionnaire and scoring used during your marriage preparation. **The fee must be paid in order to reserve the wedding date, but please speak to the Pastor if there is a difficulty in making this payment.**

Priest’s Stipend: Many couples choose to give a gift to the priest in appreciation for his help in preparing them for and presiding at their wedding. An appropriate amount for this stipend is \$100.00

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